



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/559,665	12/05/2005	Kohji Kanbara	281752US2X PCT	7230
22850	7590	07/06/2011		
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND MAIER & NEUSTADT, L.L.P. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314				
EXAMINER				
SCLACCA, SCOTT M				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
2478				
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
07/06/2011		ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

patentdocket@oblon.com
oblonpat@oblon.com
jgardner@oblon.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/559,665

Applicant(s)

KANBARA ET AL.

Examiner

Scott M. Sciacca

Art Unit

2478

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 June 2010.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1.5, 7-14 and 17-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1.5, 7-14 and 17-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 05 December 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-940)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB-08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1, 5, 7-14 and 17-19 are pending

Claims 1, 5, 7, 8, 11-14 and 17-19 are amended

Claims 2-4, 6, 15-16 are cancelled

Claims 1 and 13 are independent

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on June 15, 2010 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments filed June 15, 2010 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

3. On pages 11-13 of the remarks, Applicant argues in substance that LoBiondo, Tami and Landesmann do not teach automatically authenticating a user and displaying advertisements for the authenticated user.

In response to the amended subject matter, the Examiner has cited additional portions of Tami which disclose automatically authenticating a user having an identifying device (Tami: [0488], [0490]; i.e., the user is authenticated by scanning a card) and displaying advertisements for the authenticated user (Tami: [0086]; [0498]; [0512-0567]; Fig. 3 shows ads (e.g., sale items 142, express rewards 142) displayed on a screen for a user).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.
5. **Claims 1, 5, 7-9, 11-14 and 17-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LoBiondo et al. (US 5,305,199) in view of Tami et al. (US 2004/0059634) and in view of Landesmann et al (2002/0053076).**

Regarding claim 1, LoBiondo an image forming apparatus using system including at least one image forming apparatus having a touch panel and an office supply information server that is connected to the image forming apparatuses via a network, the image forming apparatus comprising:

an operating system that provides a graphical user interface by which the user operates the image forming apparatus on the touch panel (LoBiondo: Col. 2, lines 25-49);

a client information sending part for sending order information to the office supply information server (LoBiondo: Col. 3, lines 1-46); and

a server information receiving part for receiving information from the office supply information server (LoBiondo: Col. 1, lines 45-52; Fig. 1 and 2; "The reprographic machine 10 is provided with a remote communication capability, for example, via a remote interactive communication (RIC) system, so that information to and from a remote supplies ordering location can be effected" Col. 3, lines 16-46),

the office supply information server comprising:

a server information sending part for sending information to the image forming apparatus ("Expected delivery and shipment information can be transmitted via link 27b to reprographic machine 10" LoBiondo: Col. 3, lines 42-46; Col. 3, lines 26-34); and

a client information receiving part for receiving information input from the touch panel of the image forming apparatus ("At the supplies reordering location, a modem 40 receives data from or provides data to the link 27b. Data from the network 28 comprises primarily orders for" LoBiondo: Col. 3, lines 26-46),

the image forming apparatus further comprising:

a supply remaining amount sending part for sending data of a remaining amount of a consumable item that is consumed by the image forming apparatus in image forming processing (LoBiondo: Col. 2, lines 54-68; Col. 3, lines 1-15, Fig. 7),

a warning relating to the remaining amount to the image forming apparatus when the received remaining amount is smaller than a predetermined amount ("determine if the inventory level has passed the ordering threshold.", "show a reorder message to alert the operator that reorder is necessary." LoBiondo: Col. 4, lines 17-28),

and the image forming apparatus orders the office supply consumable item from the office supply information server by using the client information sending part based on information input from the touch panel ("reorder information can be either automatically sent by the communications module 26 to the reorder location directly, or semi-automatically after confirmation via the touch screen 14 by the operator" LoBiondo: Col. 4, lines 24-28; Col. 3, lines 26-46). LoBiondo further discloses wherein information is sent to and from a supply reordering site such as order confirmations, expected delivery dates and shipment confirmations (LoBiondo: Col. 3, lines 15-46).

LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose a user identifying part that automatically authenticates a user having an identifying device, sending remaining amount data to the office supply information server; wherein the office supply information server sends the warning, a mail box that provides a storage area for each user who uses the image forming apparatus; an advertisement generator that generates advertisement information for each user based on past order history and stores the advertisement

information in the storage area for each user; a checking device that checks the mail box storage area of the authenticated user for an advertisement; a display device that displays advertisement information for the authenticated user; and displays the warning relating to the remaining amount only for a specific user identified by the image forming apparatus.

However, Tami discloses a inventory management server that receives remaining amount of inventory information (Tami: [0026]; [0054-0058]; [0066]) and sends notifications/warnings when inventories levels low (Tami: [0082-0083]; [0058]; [0061]; [0068]). Tami also discloses the use of authorization levels wherein information is only displayed or available for access for specific users identified as having the appropriate authorization (Tami: [0122], [0209]). Tami also discloses a user identifying part that automatically authenticates a user having an identifying device (Tami: [0488], [0490]; i.e., the user is authenticated by scanning a card). Tami further discloses checking for advisements/coupons/promotion offers for buyers to increase sales of items and tracking the use of the advisements/coupons offers and displaying the advisements/coupons/promotion offers (Tami: [0086]; [0498]; [0512-0567]; Fig. 3 shows ads (e.g., sale items 142, express rewards 142) displayed on a screen for a user). Tami provides the advantage of automating the tracking, ordering and management of inventory, and the use of advisements/coupons/promotion offers to increase the sales of specific items (Tami: [0012-0014]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring and ordering system of LoBiondo to include

the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014]).

The modified LoBiondo reference does not explicitly disclose a mail box that provides a storage area for each user who uses the image forming apparatus; an advertisement generator that generates advertisement information for each user based on past order history and stores the advertisement information in the storage area for each user; a display for displaying advertisement information of a specific user identified by the image forming apparatus; and displays only for a specific user identified by the image forming apparatus. However Landesmann discloses a mail box that provides a storage area for each user who uses the image forming apparatus (Landesmann: [0017-0018], [0111], [0122]); an advertisement generator that generates advertisement information for each user based on past order history and stores the advertisement information in the storage area for each user (Landesmann: [0018], [0119], [0122-0123], [0171], [0176]); a display for displaying advertisement information of a specific user identified by the image forming apparatus (Landesmann: [0018], [0119], [0122-0123], [0171], [0176], [0234]); and displays only for a specific user identified by the image forming apparatus (Landesmann: [0018], [0119], [0122-0123], [0171], [0176], [0234]). Landesmann also discloses the use of identifying specific users that are authorized to access information related to purchasing from a merchant (Landesmann: [0071-0072]). Landesmann provides the advantage of providing targeted advertisements and discount offers to a specific identified user/buyers based on their past order history in order to increase the sales of items they would likely buy or have bought in the past

(Landesmann: [0018], [0111-1118]) and the use standard electronic mail messaging services/storage to relay information to and from buyers/orders and sellers/suppliers related to ordering new supplies (Landesmann: [0178], [0228], [0230-0231], [0140]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring and ordering system and inventory management of the modified LoBiondo reference to include mail box, advertisement and display system of Landesmann in to providing targeted advertisements and discount offers to a specific identified user/buyers based on their past order history in order to increase the sales of items they would likely buy or have bought in the past (Landesmann: [0018], [0111-1118]) and the use standard electronic mail messaging services/storage box to relay information to and from buyers/orders and sellers/suppliers related to ordering new supplies (Landesmann: [0178], [0228], [0230-0231], [0140]).

Regarding claim 5, the modified LoBiondo reference disclose the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 1 as described above. LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose the office supply information server further comprising: a user information storing part for storing order history of each user; a preference information storing part for storing preference information of each user; an advertisement generation part for generating an advertisement to be sent to each user on the basis of the order history and the preference information; and an advertisement sending part for sending the advertisement to the image forming apparatus. However,

Tami discloses an office supply information server further comprising: a user information storing part for storing order history of each user ("In addition to demographics/transaction history capture" Tami: [0489-0493] [0061]); a preference information storing part for storing preference information of each user ("Referring still to FIG. 4, the express savings program 172 provides the ability to offer rewards (e.g. coupons, gift certificates, etc.) and multiple pricing structures to individual customers based on purchase levels and shopping habits, and may be implemented using multiple devices including POS terminals 124, kiosks and the internet." Tami: [0496]); an advertisement generation part for generating an advertisement to be sent to each user on the basis of the order history and the preference information (Tami: [0496]); and an advertisement sending part for sending the advertisement to the image forming apparatus (Tami: [0496]) in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring, ordering and advertisement system of time modified LoBiondo reference to include the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory.

Regarding claim 7, the modified LoBiondo reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 1 as described above.

LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose the image forming apparatus further comprising a scanning part for scanning a barcode of the supply; and a barcode

sending part for sending information of the barcode to the office supply information server, the office supply information server further comprising: a search part for searching for an office supply corresponding to the barcode by using the information of the barcode, wherein the office supply information server sends information of the office supply to the image forming apparatus if the office supply is found from the information of the barcode, and the office supply information server registers the information of the office supply in an expansion commodity storage as a commodity to be newly dealt in if the office supply is not found from the information of the barcode. However Tami further discloses, an image forming apparatus further comprising;

a scanning part for scanning a barcode of the supply (Tami: [0054-0058]); and

a barcode sending part for sending information of the barcode to the office supply information server ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads."

Tami: [0054-0058]), the office supply information server further comprising:

a search part for searching for an office supply corresponding to the barcode by using the information of the barcode ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]),

wherein the office supply information server sends information of the office supply to the image forming apparatus if the office supply is found from the information

of the barcode, and the office supply information server registers the information of the office supply in an expansion commodity storage as a commodity to be newly dealt in if the office supply is not found from the information of the barcode ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058] in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014])).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring, ordering and advertisement system of time modified LoBiondo reference to include the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory.

Regarding claim 8, the modified LoBiondo reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 1 as described above. LoBiondo further discloses wherein: the image forming apparatus displays an order screen for ordering consumable items (LoBiondo: Col. 4, lines 17-28).

LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose in addition to displaying a supply order prompt message, an advertisement, a warning or the information of the supply corresponding to the barcode; and the image forming apparatus sends information input from the order screen to the office supply information sever so that the office supplies consumable items are ordered.

However Tami dislocates in addition to displaying a supply order prompt message ("In the preferred embodiment, the method of the present invention allows for automatic stock replenishment based on POS scan data with re -order points configurable in the inventory file." Tami: [0077], "For example, a database of in-store-inventory can be analyzed for generating computer assisted re-stocking orders" Tami: [0061]), an advertisement, a warning or the information of the supply corresponding to the barcode ([0054-0058], "When the out of stock items are replenished, the system would need to alert store personnel" [0574], "The integrated inventory management system 114 of the present invention tracks item movement at the item level by time (hh:mm) day, week and event, forecasts re -order requirements and issues stock level alerts." Tami: [0082]), and the image forming apparatus sends information input from the order screen to the office supply information sever so that the office supplies are ordered ("In the preferred embodiment, the method of the present invention allows for automatic stock replenishment based on POS scan data with re -order points configurable in the inventory file." Tami: [0077], "For example, a database of in-store-inventory can be analyzed for generating computer assisted re-stocking orders" Tami: [0061], "When the out of stock items are replenished, the system would need to alert store personnel" [0574], "The integrated inventory management system 114 of the present invention tracks item movement at the item level by time (hh:mm) day, week and event, forecasts re -order requirements and issues stock level alerts." Tami: [0082]) in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring, ordering and advertisement system of time modified LoBiondo reference to include the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory.

Regarding claim 9, the modified LoBiondo reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 8 as described above. LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose wherein the order screen is displayed on the image forming apparatus as a screen different from a screen showing the supply order prompt message, the advertisement, the warning or the information of the supply corresponding to the barcode. However, Tami further discloses wherein the order screen is displayed on the image forming apparatus as a screen different from a screen showing the supply order prompt message (Tami: [0082]), the advertisement, the warning or the information of the supply corresponding to the barcode ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058], "In the preferred embodiment, the method of the present invention allows for automatic stock replenishment based on POS scan data with re-order points configurable in the inventory file." Tami: [0077], "For example, a database of in-store-inventory can be analyzed for generating computer assisted re-stocking orders" Tami: [0061], "When the out of stock items are replenished, the system would need to alert store personnel" [0574], "The integrated inventory management

system 114 of the present invention tracks item movement at the item level by time (hh:mm) day, week and event, forecasts re -order requirements and issues stock level alerts." Tami: [0082]) in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring, ordering and advertisement system of time modified LoBiondo reference to include the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory.

Regarding claim 11, the modified LoBiondo discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 1 as described above. LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose, wherein: the office supply information server refers to an amount of money stored in the user information storing part wherein the amount of money is a limit amount usable by the user for ordering office supplies; and if an amount of money necessary for purchasing the consumable items ordered from the image forming apparatus by the user is smaller than the limit amount of money, the image forming apparatus performs an approval process. However, Tami further discloses wherein the office supply information server refers to an amount of money stored in the user information storing part wherein the amount of money is a limit amount usable by the user for ordering office supplies (Tami: [0013], [0026], [0062]), and

if an amount of money necessary for purchasing the office supplies ordered from the image forming apparatus by the user is smaller than the limit amount of money, the image forming apparatus performs an approval process (Tami: [0013], [0026], [0062]) in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring, ordering and advertisement system of time modified LoBiondo reference to include the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory.

Regarding claim 12, the modified LoBiondo reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 1 as claimed above. LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose including a first image forming apparatus placed in a user's site, a second image forming apparatus placed in a municipality, and an office supply information server that is connected to the first and second image forming apparatuses, wherein: the first image forming apparatus applies for a document by sending application information to the office supply information server; the office supply information server sends a document reservation number to the first image forming apparatus on the basis of the application information; the first image forming apparatus outputs the document reservation number; and the second image forming apparatus outputs the document on the basis of the document reservation number input by the user. However Tami discloses wherein the office supply information server sends a document reservation number to the first image forming apparatus on the basis of the

application information ("The high speed server receives and stores input data from the POS system and updates the relational databases of the primary in-store on a real time basis as store items are being "rung up" at the point of sale. The primary POS server 86 is also in communication with the inventory management system stored on the ISP 14. Accordingly, the inventory management system is updated virtually at the same time and rate as the relational data bases on the primary POS server 86" Tami: [0062] "The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]);

the first image forming apparatus outputs the document reservation number ("fully automated generation of orders to replenish merchandise, based on POS scan data" Tami: [0013], [0026], [0062]); and

the second image forming apparatus outputs the document on the basis of the document reservation number input by the user ("Additionally, the POS terminal may include a software or hardware switch to allow the cashier to take control of the customer display in order to assist the customer without having to leave the cashier's station." Tami: [0067]) in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring, ordering and advertisement system of time

modified LoBiondo reference to include the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory.

Regarding claim 13, LoBiondo discloses an office supply information server that is connected to at least one image forming apparatus having a touch panel via a network, the office supply information server comprising:

a server information sending part for sending information to the image forming apparatus("Expected delivery and shipment information can be transmitted via link 27b to reprographic machine 10" LoBiondo: Col. 3, lines 42-46; Col. 3, lines 26-34); and

a client information receiving part for receiving information input from the touch panel of the image forming apparatus ("At the supplies reordering location, a modem 40 receives data from or provides data to the link 27b. Data from the network 28 comprises primarily orders for" LoBiondo: Col. 3, lines 26-46), wherein,

receiving data of a remaining amount of a consumable item that is consumed in the image forming apparatus in image forming processing (LoBiondo: Col. 2, lines 54-68; Col. 3, lines 1-15, Fig. 7),, and

a warning relating to the remaining amount to the image forming apparatus when the received remaining amount is smaller than a predetermined amount("determine if the inventory level has passed the ordering threshold.", "show a reorder message to alert the operator that reorder is necessary." LoBiondo: Col. 4, lines 17-28),

the office supply information server sends a supply replenishment prompt signal for prompting a user of the image forming apparatus to replenish the consumable item

to the image forming apparatus when the remaining amount is smaller than a predetermined amount for the consumable item ("reorder information can be either automatically sent by the communications module 26 to the reorder location directly, or semi-automatically after confirmation via the touch screen 14 by the operator"

LoBiondo: Col. 4, lines 24-28; Col. 3, lines 26-46; Fig. 3-4). LoBiondo further discloses wherein information is sent to and from a supply reordering site such as order confirmations, expected delivery dates and shipment confirmations (LoBiondo: Col. 3, lines 15-46).

LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose a user identifying part that automatically authenticates a user having an identifying device, the office supply information server receiving data of a remaining consumable item; wherein the office supply information server sends the warning, having a mail box that provides a storage area for each user who uses the image forming apparatus; an advertisement generator part for generating advertisement information for each user based on past order history and storing the advertisement information in the storage area of the image forming apparatus for each user; a checking device that checks the mail box storage area of the authenticated user for an advertisement; a display part for displaying advertisement information for the authenticated user; and displays only for a specific user identified by the image forming apparatus. However, Tami discloses inventory management server that receives remaining amount of inventory information (Tami: [0026]; [0054-0058]; [0066]) and sends notifications/warnings when inventories levels low (Tami: [0082-0083]; [0058]; [0061]; [0068]). Tami also discloses the use of authorization levels wherein information

is only displayed or available for access for specific users identified as having the appropriate authorization (Tami: [0122], [0209]). Tami also discloses a user identifying part that automatically authenticates a user having an identifying device (Tami: [0488], [0490]; i.e., the user is authenticated by scanning a card). Tami further discloses checking for advisements/coupons/promotion offers for buyers to increase sales of items and tracking the use of the advisements/coupons offers and displaying the advisements/coupons/promotion offers (Tami: [0086]; [0498]; [0512-0567]; Fig. 3 shows ads (e.g., sale items 142, express rewards 142) displayed on a screen for a user). Tami provides the advantage of automating the tracking, ordering and management of inventory, and the use of advisements/coupons/promotion offers to increase the sales of specific items (Tami: [0012-0014]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring and ordering system of LoBiondo to include the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014]).

The modified LoBiondo reference does not explicitly disclose having a mail box that provides a storage area for each user who uses the image forming apparatus; an advertisement generator part for generating advertisement information for each user based on past order history and storing the advertisement information in the storage area of the image forming apparatus for each user; a display part for displaying advertisement information of a specific user identified by the image forming apparatus; and displays only for a specific user identified by the image forming apparatus.

However a mail box that provides a storage area for each user who uses the image forming apparatus (Landesmann: [0017-0018], [0111], [0122]); an advertisement generator that generates advertisement information for each user based on past order history and stores the advertisement information in the storage area for each user (Landesmann: [0018], [0119], [0122-0123], [0171], [0176]); a display for displaying advertisement information of a specific user identified by the image forming apparatus (Landesmann: [0018], [0119], [0122-0123], [0171], [0176], [0234]); and displays only for a specific user identified by the image forming apparatus (Landesmann: [0018], [0119], [0122-0123], [0171], [0176], [0234]). Landesmann provides the advantage of providing targeted advertisements and discount offers to a specific identified user/buyers based on their past order history in order to increase the sales of items they would likely buy or have bought in the past (Landesmann: [0018], [0111-1118]) and the use standard electronic mail messaging services/storage box to relay information to and from buyers/orders and sellers/suppliers related to ordering new supplies (Landesmann: [0178], [0228], [0230-0231], [0140]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring and ordering system and inventory management of the modified LoBiondo reference to include mail box, advertisement and display system of Landesmann in order to increase the sales of items they would likely buy or have bought in the past (Landesmann: [0018], [0111-1118]) and the use standard electronic mail messaging services and storage to relay information to and

from buyers/orders and sellers/suppliers related to ordering new supplies (Landesmann: [0178], [0228], [0230-0231], [0140]).

Regarding claim 14, the modified LoBiondo reference disclose the office supply information server as claimed in claim 13 as described above. LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose the office supply information server further comprising:

- a user information storing part for storing order history of each user; a preference information storing part for storing preference information of each user;

- an advertisement generation part for generating an advertisement to be sent to each user on the basis of the order history and the preference information; and

- an advertisement sending part for sending the advertisement to the image forming apparatus.

However, Tami discloses an office supply information server further comprising: a user information storing part for storing order history of each user ("In addition to demographics/transaction history capture" Tami: [0489-0493] [0061]); a preference information storing part for storing preference information of each user ("Referring still to FIG. 4, the express savings program 172 provides the ability to offer rewards (e.g. coupons, gift certificates, etc.) and multiple pricing structures to individual customers based on purchase levels and shopping habits, and may be implemented using multiple devices including POS terminals 124, kiosks and the internet." Tami: [0496]); an advertisement generation part for generating an advertisement to be sent to each user on the basis of the order history and the preference information (Tami: [0496]); and an

advertisement sending part for sending the advertisement to the image forming apparatus (Tami: [0496]) in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring, ordering and advertisement system of time modified LoBiondo reference to include the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory.

Regarding claim 17, the modified LoBiondo reference discloses the office supply information server as claimed in claim 13 as described above. LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose the office supply information server further comprising:

a search part for receiving information of a barcode from the image forming apparatus, and searching for consumable item corresponding to the barcode by using the information of the barcode,

wherein the office supply information server sends information of the consumable item to the image forming apparatus if the consumable item is found from the information of the barcode, and the information server registers the information of the consumable item in an expansion commodity storage as a commodity to be newly dealt in if the consumable item is not found from the information of the barcode.

However Tami further discloses, the office supply information server further comprising:

a search part for receiving information of a barcode from the image forming apparatus ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]), and searching for an office supply corresponding to the barcode by using the information of the barcode ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]),

wherein the office supply information server sends information of the office supply to the image forming apparatus if the office supply is found from the information of the barcode, and the office supply information server registers the information of the office supply in an expansion commodity storage as a commodity to be newly dealt in if the office supply is not found from the information of the barcode ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]), and the office supply information server registers the information of the office supply in an expansion commodity storage as a commodity to be newly dealt in if the office supply is not found from the information of the barcode (Tami: [0054-0058],[0081-0085]) in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring, ordering and advertisement system of time modified LoBiondo reference to include the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory.

Regarding claim 18, the modified LoBiondo reference discloses the office supply information server as claimed in claim 13 as described above. LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose wherein:

the office supply information server refers to an amount of money stored in the user information storing part wherein the amount of money is a limit amount usable by a user for ordering consumable items; and

if an amount of money necessary for purchasing consumable items ordered from the image forming apparatus by the user is smaller than the limit amount of money, the image forming apparatus performs an approval process.

However, Tami further discloses, wherein the office supply information server refers to an amount of money stored in the user information storing part wherein the amount of money is a limit amount usable by a user for ordering office supplies (Tami: [0098-0120], [0006], [0052]), and

if an amount of money necessary for purchasing office supplies ordered from the image forming apparatus by the user is smaller than the limit amount of money, the image forming apparatus performs an approval process (Tami: [0098-0120] , [0006],

[0052], [0077-0084]) in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring, ordering and advertisement system of time modified LoBiondo reference to include the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory.

Regarding claim 19 the modified LoBiondo reference discloses the office supply information server as claimed in claim 13 as described above, the office supply information server further comprising:

a stock management part for managing stock of office consumable items, wherein the stock management part performs stock management on the basis of information of the consumable item relating to the supply order prompt message, information of the consumable item relating to the warning, or the information of the barcode.

However, Tami further discloses, the office supply information server further comprising:

a stock management part for managing stock of office supplies, wherein the stock management part performs stock management on the basis of information of an office supply relating to the supply order prompt message ("fully automated generation of orders to replenish merchandise, based on POS scan data" Tami: [0013], [0082]), information of an office supply relating to the warning, or the information of the barcode

("When the out of stock items are replenished, the system would need to alert store personnel" [0574], "The integrated inventory management system 114 of the present invention tracks item movement at the item level by time (hh:mm) day, week and event, forecasts re -order requirements and issues stock level alerts." Tami: [0082], "The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]) in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory (Tami: [0012-0014]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the supply monitoring, ordering and advertisement system of time modified LoBiondo reference to include the inventory management system of Tami in order to automate the tracking, order and managing of inventory.

6. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable LoBiondo in view of Tami and Landesmann as applied to claims 1 and 8 above, and further in view of Kobayashi et al. (US 20040083260 A1) hereafter Kobayashi.

Regarding claim 10, the modified LoBiondo reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 8 as described above. LoBiondo does not explicitly disclose wherein the image forming apparatus outputs the order

information input from the order screen as a facsimile format so that the consumable item is ordered by facsimile.

However, Kobayashi discloses the use of Fax machines (Kobayashi: [0003], [0016-0017]).

Kobayashi further provides the advantage of providing a "multifunction machine/server system capable of dealing with electronic documents at a higher efficiency and being actualized at low costs" (Kobayashi: abstract).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of LoBiondo, Tami and Kobayashi before them at the time the invention was made to modify the inventory monitoring, ordering and advertisement system of time modified LoBiondo reference to include the use of facsimile format as taught by Kobayashi.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott M. Sciacca whose telephone number is (571)270-1919. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday, 7:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeff Pwu can be reached on (571) 272-6798. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Scott M. Sciacca/
Examiner, Art Unit 2478

/Jeffrey Pwu/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2478